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## Stain Removal

Cooperative Extension South Dakota State University

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FS 519  
(Revised)

# STAIN REMOVAL



COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION  
SERVICE

SOUTH DAKOTA  
STATE  
UNIVERSITY

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE



# STAIN REMOVAL

STAIN	TREATMENT
ACIDS	Sponge with water and ammonia. Flush with water.
ADHESIVE TAPE	Remove the gummy substance carefully with a dull knife; avoid damaging fabric. Sponge with an approved dry cleaning solvent.*
ALKALIES	Sponge with water. Flush with water. Add vinegar and flush with water again.
ANTI-PERSPIRANTS DEODORANTS	Soak in a solution of 1 quart warm water, ½ teaspoon liquid hand dishwashing detergent, and 1 tablespoon ammonia for 30 minutes. Rinse with water. Or soak in a solution of 1 quart warm water and 1 tablespoon vinegar for 1 hour. Rinse with water.
BLOOD OR MEAT JUICE	Soak in a solution of 1 quart warm water, ½ teaspoon liquid hand dishwashing detergent, and 1 tablespoon ammonia for 15 minutes. If the fabric is strong enough, tamp. Blot occasionally with absorbent material. Continue as long as any stain is being removed. For a blood stain that persists, wet the stain with hydrogen peroxide and add a drop of ammonia. Rinse with water.
CANDLE WAX OR PARAFFIN	Place stain between blotting papers or folded paper towels. Iron at low temperature. Replace papers and iron again. Repeat until no more wax melts. If any stain is left, use chlorine bleach. Flush with water.
CARBON PAPER	Sponge with drycleaning solvent. For delicate fabrics, apply dry spotter to stain and cover with a pad of absorbent material dampened with dry spotter. Let stand as long as any stain is being removed. Change pad as it picks up stain. Keep stain and pad moist with dry spotter. For stronger fabrics, apply dry spotter and tamp or use a spoon. Flush with drycleaning solvent.
CATSUP CHILI SAUCE, ETC.	Sponge with drycleaning solvent. For delicate fabrics, apply dry spotter to stain and cover with a pad of absorbent material dampened with dry spotter. Let stand as long as any stain is being removed. Change pad as it picks up stain. Keep stain and pad moist with dry spotter.
CHEWING GUM	Scrape off without damaging fabric. Put an ice cube under the fabric or ice cubes in a plastic bag over the gum to harden it. Put raw egg white on the gum on leather and scrape off (such as on a shoe). Or place clean absorbent material under the stain. Apply drycleaning solvent and cover stain with a pad of absorbent material dampened with drycleaning solvent. Change the absorbent material as it picks up stain.
CHOCOLATE OR COCOA	Follow directions for removing catsup and chili sauce stains.
COFFEE AND TEA	Soak in a solution of 1 quart warm water, ½ teaspoon liquid hand dishwashing detergent, and 1 tablespoon vinegar for 15 minutes. Rinse with water.
COSMETICS—ROUGE, LIPSTICK, EYE SHADOW	Apply drycleaning solvent and dry spotter and blot immediately with absorbent material. If stain begins to spread, flush immediately with drycleaning solvent. Let all drycleaning solvent evaporate. Sponge with water.



<b>STAIN</b>	<b>TREATMENT</b>
<b>CRAYON</b>	Sponge with drycleaning solvent. For delicate fabrics, apply dry spotter to stain and cover with a pad of absorbent material dampened with dry spotter. Let stand as long as any stain is being removed. Change pad as it picks up stain. Keep stain and pad moist with dry spotter. Flush with drycleaning solvent.
<b>FINGER NAIL POLISH</b>	Apply amyl acetate to stain and cover with a pad of absorbent material dampened with amyl acetate. Keep moist for 15 minutes, blotting occasionally with absorbent material. Flush with drycleaning solvent.
<b>FISH, SLIME, MUCUS, VOMIT</b>	Soak in a solution of 1 quart warm water, ½ teaspoon liquid hand dishwashing detergent, and 1 tablespoon ammonia for 15 minutes. If the fabric is strong enough, tamp. Blot occasionally with absorbent material. Continue as long as any stain is being removed.
<b>FRUIT</b>	If safe for fabric, pour boiling water through the spot from a height of 1 to 3 feet. Or see method for coffee and tea stains.
<b>GRASS, FLOWER FOLIAGE</b>	Sponge with drycleaning solvent as long as any stain is being removed. Or apply amyl acetate and rub stain gently with a pad of absorbent material dampened with amyl acetate. Flush with drycleaning solvent.
<b>GREASE AND OILS</b>	Follow directions for removing crayon stains.
<b>INK—BALL POINT</b>	Washing often sets ball point ink stains. Apply lukewarm glycerine. If fabric is strong enough, tamp or use a spoon. Blot frequently by pressing hard on the stain with absorbent material. Remove loosened stain immediately. Flush with water. Hair spray works well in hard-to-reach areas, such as pockets.
<b>INK—INDIA OR DRAWING</b>	Treat at once. These are hard to remove if allowed to dry. Follow directions for removing crayon stains.
<b>IODINE</b>	Soak in cool water. If stain remains, add 1 teaspoon of sodium thiosulfate crystals to ½ cup warm water and stir until completely dissolved. Add a few drops of ammonia. Wet the stain with this solution. Flush with water. For non-washable articles moisten the stain with water and hold in the steam from a boiling kettle.
<b>MERCUROCHROME, METAPHENE, MERTHIOLATE</b>	Follow directions for removing anti-perspirant and deodorant stains.
<b>MILDEW</b>	This is a mold growth in the fabric. Treat before the growth has a chance to weaken the fabric. Gently brush off excess. Wash and dry in the sun. Follow with an oxygen or chlorine bleach if necessary. For non-washable articles flush with drycleaning solvent.
<b>MUSTARD</b>	Apply wet spotter and ammonia. If the fabric is strong enough, tamp or use a spoon. Flush with water. If any stain is left, wet with hydrogen peroxide and add a drop of ammonia. Flush with water.
<b>PERSPIRATION</b>	Follow directions for removing anti-perspirant and deodorant stains.
<b>RUST</b>	Spread over a pan of boiling water and squeeze lemon juice over it; or sprinkle salt on stain and apply lemon juice. Spread in sun or if fabric is washable boil the stained article in a pint of water containing 4 tablespoons of cream of tartar, or use a commercial rust remover and follow directions on the package.
<b>SCORCH</b>	Follow the directions for blood, if article is washable. To remove light scorch on non-washable fabric use hydrogen peroxide (3% solution is safe for all fabrics). Moisten stain with a few drops and expose to sunlight, or for more severe stains cover with a cloth dampened in hydrogen peroxide. Cover with a dry cloth and press with an iron as hot as the fabric will stand. Rinse well.



STAIN	TREATMENT
SHOE POLISH	See method for crayon stain removal, or soak in a solution of 1 quart warm water, ½ teaspoon liquid hand dishwashing detergent, and 1 tablespoon vinegar for 30 minutes. Agitate occasionally.
SOFT DRINKS	Follow directions for removing blood stains. When soft drink is spilled on a fabric sponge spot at once with cool water. Some are invisible when dry but turn yellow upon aging and with heat. This is caramelized sugar and is very hard to remove once it is in the fabric.
SMOKE, SOOT	Follow directions for removing crayon stains.
TAR	Follow directions for removing crayon stains.
TOBACCO	Follow directions for removing grass and flower foliage stains.
TRANSFER PATTERNS	Use approved grease solvent.*
URINE	Follow directions for removing anti-perspirant and deodorant stains.
YELLOWING, BROWN STAIN	These unknown stains sometimes appear after storage of articles. Use as many of the following as are safe for the fabric and are necessary. Follow this order. 1. Wash. 2. Use an oxygen bleach. 3. Use method for rust stain removal.

\*Always use grease solvents in small amounts, and take care not to breathe the fumes. Avoid those containing carbon tetrachloride and those of an explosive nature. Use all solvents away from open flames. Store in a safe place. There are a number of commercial grease solvents.

#### Stain removal supplies:

Absorbent Material	Drycleaning Solvent
Alcohol	Dry Spotter*
Ammonia	Enzyme Products
Amyl Acetate	Glycerine
Brushes	Hydrogen Peroxide
Chlorine Bleach	Iodine
Coconut Oil	Sodium Thiosulfate
Color Remover	Vinegar (white)
Detergent	Wet Spotter**

\* Dry Spotter: To prepare dry spotter, mix one part coconut oil and eight parts drycleaning solvent. This solution is used to remove many kinds of stains. Dry spotter keeps well if the container is tightly capped to prevent evaporation of the drycleaning solvent. If you cannot obtain coconut oil, use mineral oil in the same amount as coconut oil.

\*\* Wet Spotter: Mix one part glycerine, one part liquid hand dishwashing detergent, and eight parts water. Shake well before each use. Store in a plastic squeeze bottle.

#### GENERAL RULES FOR STAIN REMOVAL

Identify stain and fiber content of garment.

Treat stains while they are fresh.

Test for color change and fabric damage before trying any remover.

If source is unknown, treat with cool water before applying any other treatment. Water is the most useful solvent for non-greasy stains and water and liquid detergent (including liquid hair shampoo) for many greasy and non-greasy stains.

Place stained area down so that stain can be washed off of fabric, not through it.

The working surface for stain removal should be a hard surface of a material that will not be affected by any of the chemicals used. A glass surface or a heavy glass pie pan, turned upside down, makes a good working surface.

Work carefully and patiently. Use removers sparingly with light, brushing strokes. Work from edges to center of stain. Work on absorbent surface, such as a towel or blotter. Change the blotting surface often.



Treat the smallest area possible. Never rub or scrub.

1. **SPONGING:** Place stained area, wrong side up, over a pad of absorbent material. Dampen another piece of absorbent material with appropriate solution. **Moisten the stain lightly from center toward edge.** Keep the treated area as small as possible.
2. **FLUSHING:** Place clean absorbent material under the stain. Add the proper stain remover in small amounts.
3. **TAMPING:** With a small brush, use a motion similar to that of driving a tack. Use a light action and raise the brush 2 to 3 inches above the fabric, placing it firmly on the fabric.
4. **USING A SPOON:** Using the edge of the spoon, move it back and forth about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch in

each direction. Short strokes are the most effective. Do not press down with the spoon.

Dry area quickly but do not press until all traces of stain and solvent have been removed.

For non-washable fabrics, rely on your dry cleaner. Provide him with as much information as possible.

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